

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 1, 6-8 and 10, and add new Claims 13-16 to read as follows.

1. (Currently amended) A process for forming images comprising the steps of:

conducting recording on a recording medium provided with an image-receiving layer, the image-receiving layer containing inorganic particles having a diameter of 0.1 to 10 μm for imparting a matted appearance to the surface of the image-receiving layer;

laminating a laminating film having a thickness of 2 to 40 μm and comprising only a thermoplastic film without a backing layer onto the image-receiving layer; and

plasticizing and smoothing the surface of the thermoplastic film that is opposite to the surface in contact with the image-receiving layer with heating and pressurizing means to bond a back side of the thermoplastic film onto the image-receiving layer.

2. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein a surface glossiness of the heating and pressurizing means is equal to or greater than 10% at an incident angle of 20°.

3. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the surface glossiness is equal to or greater than 70% at an incident angle of 75°.

4. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein either a glass transition point of the thermoplastic film is lower than a glass transition point of a binder resin in the image-receiving layer or a film-forming temperature of the thermoplastic film is lower than a film-forming temperature of a binder resin in the image-receiving layer.

5. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic film is a laminate of two or more thermoplastic polymer layers.

6. (Currently amended) An apparatus for forming images comprising:
an ink-jet head for recording on a recording medium;
a laminate section for laminating a laminating film having a thickness of 2 to 40 μm and comprised of only a thermoplastic film without a backing layer onto the recording medium on which recording has been conducted; and
heating and pressurizing means for plasticizing and smoothing the thermoplastic film by heating and pressurizing and bonding a back side of the thermoplastic film onto an image-receiving layer of the recording medium,

wherein the surface roughness (Ra) of the surface of said heating and pressurizing means that comes into contact with the thermoplastic film is 3 μ m or less.

7. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ An apparatus as set forth in claim 6, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of said heating and pressurizing means is of a rubber material.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ An apparatus as set forth in claim 6, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of said heating and pressurizing means is of a silicon rubber.

Claim 9 (cancelled).

10. (Currently amended) A process for forming images comprising the steps of:

conducting recording on a recording medium provided with an image-receiving layer;

laminating a laminating film having a thickness of 2 to 40 μ m and comprising only a thermoplastic film onto the image-receiving layer; and

plasticizing and smoothing the surface of the laminating film that is opposite to the surface which is in contact with the image-receiving layer with heating and

pressurizing means to bond a back side of the thermoplastic film onto the image-receiving layer.

11. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 10, wherein said laminating step and said plasticizing and smoothing step are conducted at the same time.

12. (Previously presented) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said laminating step and said plasticizing and smoothing step are conducted at the same time.

13. (New) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of the heating and pressurizing means is of a rubber material.

14. (New) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of the heating and pressurizing means is of a silicon rubber.

15. (New) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 10, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of the heating and pressurizing means is of a rubber material.

16. (New) A process for forming images as set forth in Claim 10, wherein the surface, which comes into contact with the thermoplastic film, of the heating and pressurizing means is of a silicon rubber.